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# Letters

## Podhoretz doesn't understand 'dezinformatsia'

If John Podhoretz believes, as he wrote in a Jan. 28 book review of *Moscow Rules*, that *The Spike* (which I co-authored) was "a preposterous plot concerning a left-wing journalist who sees the truth about the Soviet Union, only to have his story killed by his newspaper," then *The Washington Times's* features editor and critic-at-large has a lot more to learn about his own profession.

I have been a journalist for 38 years. The KGB tried to recruit me twice during my career, once when I was *Newsweek* bureau chief in Paris in the early 1950s and again when I was the magazine's foreign editor in the late 1950s. Perhaps Mr. Podhoretz is not aware that the foreign editor of the defunct *New York Herald Tribune* was once a member of the U.S. Communist Party. Even allowing for his youth, the well-read Mr. Podhoretz must have come across the case of Herbert Matthews of *The New York Times*, who acted as a conduit for Fidel Castro's disinformation apparatus.

The Vietnam war spawned an entire generation of journalists who made it their duty to transform our sworn enemies into misunderstood innocents. This was the atmosphere of received ideas in which Soviet disinformation operations thrived so successfully inside the Western media.

Mr. Podhoretz should endeavor to familiarize himself with:

- The case of Stanislav Levchenko, the high-ranking KGB officer who ran Soviet disinformation operations out of Tokyo for five years before he chose freedom in the United States. Mr. Levchenko had recruited the assistant of one of Japan's most prominent conservative publishers. Conservative publications are a high priority target for Service A of the KGB. They give Soviet disinformation that much more credibility.

- Three hundred and thirty seven pages of testimony before the House Select Committee on Intelligence, given on July 13 and 14, 1982, include scores of examples of KGB and KGB-proxy forgeries that have

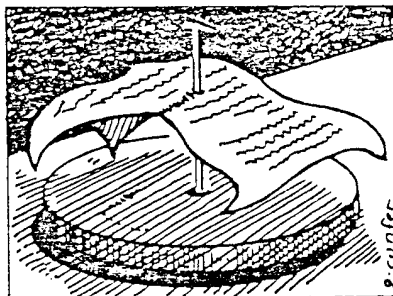
appeared in the Western media as fact.

- The case of Pierre-Charles Pathé, the French journalist who confessed to 20 years of service in the employ of the KGB's disinformation department.

- Eight State Department reports in the last two years on Soviet disinformation operations in the Western media, all of them released to the media. Has Mr. Podhoretz read a single one of them?

- An article by Lawrence S. Eagleburger, the undersecretary of state, which appeared in the *NATO Review* in Sept., 1983. It dealt entirely with Soviet disinformation activities in the Western press.

- A new scholarly work by Professors Richard H. Shultz of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy and Roy Godson of Georgetown University, both Democrats, titled *Dezinformatsia*, the Russian word for disinformation.



These academics have described their book as the non-fiction version of the *The Spike*. This is the only scholarly work on the topic of our time.

- The bestselling non-fiction book *How Democracies Perish*, by Jean-Francois Revel, France's most important media voice now that the great Raymond Aron has passed away. Mr. Revel was editor-in-chief of *L'Express*, France's most important magazine, for the best part of a decade. Mr. Revel does not consider *The Spike* to be a "preposterous" plot because he knows that it is, alas, an all too common occurrence.

As *Newsweek's* chief foreign correspondent I had a number of major exclusive stories about Soviet activities that were spiked by

ideologically-motivated editors. The most important of these was a secret French intelligence report dated May 11, 1978, documenting in great detail links between the KGB and its proxy services, on the one hand, and international terrorist groups on the other.

Mr. Podhoretz may recall that when Alexander Haig went public with this charge in early 1981, it was dismissed as cold war rhetoric. His successor George Shultz repeated the accusation in June 1984 at the Jonathan Institute Conference on International Terrorism. He, too, was ignored.

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The deservedly positive elements of the review of Robert Moss's *Moscow Rules* were fatally flawed by the spirited defense by reviewer John Podhoretz of the Soviet and Cuban active measures lobby.

Mr. Podhoretz, born with a silver pen in his hand but apparently lead between the ears, dismisses the Moss de Borchgrave books, *The Spike* and *Monimbo*, with such pejoratives as "preposterous plot(s)," "practically unreadable" and "unintentionally hilarious."

If young John delved harder than he drivels, I would offer him a stint on *The Information Digest* so he could learn the facts of KGB, PLO, and DGI (Cuban intelligence) intervention into U.S. public policy by way of the drug trade, the radical chic, local terrorists and militants, the mass media, and that certain "progressive" Washington think-tank that he refuses to name. Supercilious pomposity does not change the facts.

The reality is that there is "disinformation," and there are spies and agents of influence about whom Messrs. de Borchgrave and Moss write accurately and well. Too bad Mr. Podhoretz wasn't educated and entertained by them.

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